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AUTHOR	Heath-Camp, Betty; Camp, William G.
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ABSTRACT

Research begun in 1988 investigated the induction process of beginning vocational teachers. Several research techniques were used in the study: nominal group technique focus sessions, focus group sessions, and individual interviews; daily and weekly tape-recorded logs and site visits; national survey; and exemplary induction assistance programs. Qualitative and quantitative analysis results led to the organization of a professional development program for beginning vocational teachers. Three major research conclusions were reached: (1) induction assistance programs must be flexible; (2) mentoring programs are the most common approach to induction assistance; and (3) the induction of beginning teachers should be a collaborative effort. A comprehensive induction assistance program should consist of 11 components: systematic administrative support; detailed orientation; certification courses; structured mentoring program; coaching in reflection; professional development plan; local professional development coordinator; professional development center; beginning teacher handbook; on-going inservice workshops; and peer support group. A model professional development center has the following elements: local school site; collaborative effort among school, university, and state department of education; operated by a full-time local professional development coordinator; funded jointly; and responsible for different induction levels. (Three figures and 22 references are included.) (NLA)

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A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR BEGINNING VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

Betty Heath-Camp

Associate Professor of Marketing Education

William G. Camp

Associate Professor of Agricultural Education

Virginia Tech Office

National Center for Research in Vocational Education

Division of Vocational and Technical Education

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254

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A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR BEGINNING VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

Betty Heath-Camp

William G. Camp

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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Over the years, much research has been done to identify the problems and inservice needs of teachers. There is a growing literature base about the specific problems and inservice needs of beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984; Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edelfelt, 1989). One important work that examined the complexity and demands of the teaching profession was that of Conant (1963). The broader perspective of the induction needs, including but not limited to inservice needs, of novice teachers is a more recent research priority in educational circles. The profession is beginning to see findings reported in the literature that are valuable in planning induction programs (Yarger, 1982; Roper, Hitz, & Brim, 1985; Thies-Sprinthall, 1986). In general, this research has been limited to the induction process for academic teachers in traditional classrooms.

There has been very little attention paid in the educational research literature to the induction process and induction needs of beginning vocational teachers (Fuller, 1987; Camp, 1988). As Gage (1977) contended, discipline-specific research about teaching is more effective than generic research in improving

teaching. Thus, there was a need for research on the induction experiences and induction needs of beginning vocational teachers. This paper is only one part of a five-year investigation into the induction process for beginning vocational teachers. The present paper provides the results of an inquiry into the following research question: What should be the components of an induction assistance program designed for the professional development of beginning vocational teachers?

Conceptual Framework

Super, Crites, Hummel, Moser, Overstrict, & Warnath, (1957) proposed a comprehensive theory of vocational maturity. The Super, et al theory provides a very direct basis for examining teacher professional development. The pre-service teacher is at the latter part of what the Super model described as the exploration-trial stage. The transition between Super's exploration-trial stage and the subsequent establishment-trial stage corresponds to the induction phase in the development of beginning teachers.

Teacher education must be viewed as a long-term, developmental process (Hoffman, Edwards, O'Neal, Barnes, & Paulissen, 1986; Wildman & Niles, 1987). The process of becoming a teacher takes place over an extended period of time. Teacher professional development can be visualized as a continuum including preservice education, induction, and continuing development.

"Induction" is the broad process by which a novice teacher becomes integrated into the profession of teaching. (Waters, 1985). During the induction period, the novice teacher makes the transition from being a student or worker to becoming an established teacher (Fuller, 1969; Glickman, 1981; Huffman & Leak, 1986).

The transition from novice to established teacher is too critical a process to be left to chance as it has been in the past. As the teacher shortage develops over the next decade (Wise, 1988), and as demands for reform and improvement in education continue, we need to find a productive and effective way to assist the beginning teacher in making a smooth transition through the varying stages of professional development, particularly the critical induction period. What is needed is a structured, well-conceived, collaborative approach to induction assistance, based on research, educational theory, and experience. The program described in this paper provides just such a mechanism.

Methods

The research began in 1988 and was designed to investigate the induction process of beginning vocational teachers. It has involved a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. Research techniques used in the study are described in the paragraphs that follow.

Nominal Group Technique (NGT) focus sessions, focus group sessions (buzz groups), and in-depth individual interviews with NGT participants were conducted using 10 samples of beginning vocational teachers. Over 100 in-depth individual interviews and 54 NGT sessions were performed over a two-year period. The participants came from 8 states and involved beginning teachers in various stages of their first three years of teaching.

Two samples of beginning vocational teachers (12 teachers) were intensively followed up by means of daily tape-recorded logs throughout their first year and weekly tape-recorded logs throughout their second year of teaching. A year-long series of on-site visits were conducted for observations and for in-depth interviews with the teachers, principals, vocational directors, mentor or buddy teachers, and selected students. Two additional samples of teachers (14 teachers) completed job satisfaction scales, stress scales, and other personality and psychological instruments on a weekly repeated-measures basis during their first year of teaching.

A national survey using a probability sample of all beginning vocational teachers in the United States (N = 625) was conducted during the school year 1989-90. An appropriate instrument was developed, validated, and field tested. An overall response rate of 76% was finally achieved. Early-late comparisons indicated the respondents were representative of the population.

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Exemplary induction assistance programs were examined. All state directors of vocational education were contacted and asked to submit nominations for outstanding, innovative, or exemplary programs of induction assistance involving vocational teachers. Over 30 programs were nominated. Personnel from all of these programs were contacted for additional information. After receiving the materials, telephone interviews were conducted with the directors of six programs and field visits were made to study two programs in detail. The remaining programs were reviewed based on the materials they provided.

As previously stated, quantitative and qualitative analysis both took place. This analysis resulted in written case studies; lists of problems, assistance needs, negative activities, and other activities that took place in the lives of beginning vocational teachers; descriptions of exemplary induction programs; the development of the national survey; a determination of uniqueness of experiences to vocational teachers; and comparisons of teachers with and without teacher-education backgrounds. The results of this analysis led to the development of the program for the professional development of beginning vocational teachers.

Results

Because of space and time limitations, this paper will not report specific results of the research. The interested reader is referred to Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams, Talbert, and Barber,

(1992), On becoming a teacher: An examination of the induction of beginning vocational teachers in American public schools, Berkeley: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California. That monograph provides four chapters of detailed results from the research. Having taken the license to not detail the results, we beg the reader's indulgence as we nevertheless report selected conclusions from the monograph that pertain to this paper.

Conclusions

Fully a quarter of both positive and negative experiences of beginning vocational teachers are vocational-specific. They occur because of the discipline-specific peculiarities of the program. and would not be experienced by teachers from other academic disciplines. Not only that, but the individual experiences of teachers are all fundamentally different. While we found that Ryan's (1986) fantasy and survival stages are indeed common experiences of beginning vocational teachers, the specific details are different for every novice. Thus, one conclusion became quite clear--induction assistance programs need to be flexible to be successful.

A second very clear finding was that mentoring programs are the most common approach to induction assistance. Yet, it was also evident from our research that mentoring programs alone are not likely to produce positive results in the long run. Where mentors were appointed but not adequately trained and supervised,

the assistance actually received by beginning teachers was spotty and often negligible. Even where the mentors had been trained, the results were marginal unless administrative support for the program was adequate and continuing. Moreover, there are any number of successful induction assistance methodologies in addition to mentor-teacher programs. In the rush to embrace mentoring, many school systems have prematurely discarded other concepts that have proven valuable. Thus, we conclude that rather than a simple mentor-based approach, a more comprehensive program for induction assistance is needed.

We found that induction assistance programs that were successful were multi-faceted and broad-based. Thus, a third major conclusion of our research was that the induction of beginning vocational teachers should not be the sole responsibility of any single agency. The importance of a competent, empowered teaching faculty in our nation's vocational classrooms is too critical. And the complexity of the task of developing that kind of faculty is too great. Thus, teacher induction should be a collaborative effort among the various constituencies involved.

A Proposed Solution

Based on the research it was concluded that a comprehensive induction assistance program for beginning vocational teachers should consist of 11 components. Once a model induction assistance program was developed, it was submitted for validation

to a panel of six nationally recognized authorities on teacher induction programs. The program consists of the 11 components found in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1.
COMPONENTS OF THE INDUCTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Systematic Administrative Support	Local Professional Development Coordinator (LPDC)	Professional Development Center (PDC)
Detailed Orientation	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	Beginning Teacher Handbook
Certification Courses		
Structured Mentoring Program		On-going Inservice Workshops
Coaching in Reflection	Professional Development Plan	Peer Support Group

Discussion of The Professional Development Program

Program Goal and Objectives

It is the overall goal of this program to provide a flexible and adaptable mechanism for beginning vocational teachers to have a smoother transition into the field of teaching. More specifically, the objectives of this program are to:

1. provide support services to the beginning teacher through a professional development center, a coordinator who can assist in developing professional competencies, a mentor, and meaningful feedback from a number of sources;

2. assist the beginning teacher in becoming oriented to his or her school and school system, and its operations and procedures, and to the field of teaching;

3. provide resources to the beginning teacher such as a teacher handbook, teaching materials, curriculum, etc.;

4. provide an environment for interaction with other new teachers;

5. provide a series of inservice workshops on topics identified through the research and an assessment of the needs of beginning teachers actually participating in the program;

6. assist uncertified teachers to become certified;

7. provide the skills and opportunities for beginning teachers to reflect on their teaching and professional responsibilities;

8. assist beginning teachers to establish their own goals and objectives; and

9. retain promising talented teachers in the field of teaching.

Descriptions of Components

Professional Development Center. The Professional Development Center (PDC) is a service agency physically located within and administered by a Local Education Agency (LEA) or a consortium of LEAs. It is planned and operated in a collaborative relationship with the state department of education and an appropriate teacher-education institution. The PDC is

located within a school rather than in the system's administrative offices. The purpose of the Center is to house materials that will be of assistance to both beginning and experienced vocational teachers and vocational teachers who are student teaching. A vocational teacher of any level of experience may use the center and seek assistance from the Local Professional Development Coordinator (LPDC). The most critical characteristics of the PDC are listed in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2.
THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER (PDC) IS:

- LOCATED IN A LOCAL SCHOOL
- A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AMONG SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY, AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- OPERATED BY A FULL TIME COORDINATOR (LPDC)
- FUNDED JOINTLY BY
    * LOCAL SCHOOL OR CONSORTIUM
    * UNIVERSITY
    * STATE DEPARTMENT
- RESPONSIBLE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT LEVELS OF:
    * PRESERVE
    * INDUCTION
    * CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

Local Professional Development Coordinator (LPDC). The PDC is operated by a Local Professional Development Coordinator. It is recommended that the LPDC be a regular vocational faculty member of the local sponsoring school system, rather than an administrator within the system or a university faculty member.

The LPDC is an accomplished teacher who is interested in assuming exceptional leadership responsibilities for a short period of time. He or she is not necessarily moving permanently out of the classroom. The LPDC is trained by the cooperating teacher-education agency or the previous LPDC in providing inservice activities and in organizing and operating an induction assistance program.

The LPDC has the primary responsibility for the organization and conduct of an induction assistance program for beginning vocational teachers. In this role, the coordinator is responsible for identifying beginning vocational teachers and training experienced and successful teachers to serve as mentors. With the assistance of school administrators, the coordinator then facilitates the matching of mentors and novices. The LPDC should be out in the schools observing beginning teachers, providing inservice training, meeting with administrators, and training and assisting mentor teachers. The LPDC should also have routine hours in which he or she is available in the Center to assist teachers. In addition, the coordinator organizes ongoing professional induction support and assistance seminars for the novice teachers. Finally, the LPDC seeks out and coordinates college, state department of education, and professional organization assistance and training opportunities for both beginning and other vocational teachers. For a summary of the responsibilities of the LPDC, see Figure 3.

FIGURE 3.
THE LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR (LPDC)

- IS LOCATED IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
- IS ASSIGNED FULL TIME (AT LEAST RELEASED PART TIME)
- JOINTLY APPOINTED BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL SYSTEM
- IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING MENTORS
- ORGANIZES AND SUPERVISES INDUCTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INCLUDING
  * MENTORS
  * BEGINNING TEACHERS
  * UNIVERSITY ASSISTANCE
  * STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ASSISTANCE
  * PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE
- ORGANIZES AND ASSISTS IN MANAGEMENT OF A CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
  * CREDIT COURSES
  * NON-CREDIT WORKSHOPS
  * LOCAL INSERVICE TRAINING

Regardless of his or her level of experience, the coordinator must receive specialized training in the induction assistance role. Skills in the clinical assistance of novice teachers, reflective self-critique, mentoring, and staff development are not inherited human capabilities. The LPDC should be well educated in theory and research as well as practice.

Detailed Orientation. The research shows evidence that many beginning vocational teachers are not given adequate orientations to their respective school systems. Those who do receive orientations are often given so much information that "sensory

overload" results and much needed knowledge is lost. The LPDC ensures that new vocational teachers are given the information that our research indicates is important from the very outset. Moreover, the coordinator ensures that the orientation does not include information that can wait until later. Close monitoring of this information will help to avoid the sensory overload that often results from too much information at once.

Beginning Teacher Handbook. One of the findings that repeatedly emerged from our data was the need for a concise handbook that beginning teachers could use for routine information and to guide them as they become inducted into their teaching roles. The handbook should include actual information needed by teachers in order to operate within the system. It also should include checklists of people for teachers to meet and contacts for them to make as well as other information and procedures needed by beginning vocational teachers. This handbook has been developed based on the research conducted for this program and is part of the materials provided for this induction program. For details of the content of the handbook, the interested reader is encourage to contact the authors.

Structured Mentoring Program. In almost every beginning teacher program that was studied, mentoring was a strong component. The literature is rich on the use of mentoring and there are numerous mentoring programs throughout the nation. The beginning teachers who were studied for the development of this

program, also identified "having a mentor in their own subject" as a valued component of an induction program.

Mentors should be supportive, nurturing, guiding persons of greater experience. Mentoring skills are not inherent in experienced teachers. Mentors should be thoroughly trained and supervised to fulfill this role and their training must be something more than a single, brief inservice workshop. Mentors also should be given released time to work with their protégés. This program provides a structured approach on the use of mentors for beginning teachers and precise activities that should take place as part of the mentoring program.

Peer Support Groups. Beginning teachers who participated in the research elaborated on the need to interact with other beginning teachers in a non-threatening environment. This program incorporates meetings of peer groups as part of the activities of the induction process. In this activity, a group of beginning vocational teachers meet on a regular basis during school hours. Outsiders such as the LPDC will not normally attend the peer support meetings unless invited, but he or she will arrange the meetings and solicit topics prior to the sessions. The purpose of these meetings is to give beginning teachers an opportunity to share experiences and ideas among themselves. Care should be taken when the sessions are arranged to insure that the meetings' outcomes result in problem solving and the sharing of positive experiences rather than destructive

"complaint" sessions. Of course follow-up with the beginning teachers on the effectiveness of this activity should take place after each session.

Systematic Administrator Support. Without active support from local administrators and other supervisory personnel, the induction assistance program cannot succeed. Workshops and individual discussions should be conducted initially and pericdically by the LPDC with principals and other school administrators with responsibility for working with beginning teachers. The purposes and procedures of the induction program should be explained and administrators' assistance and support should be sought. Administrators also should be trained in how to work more effectively with beginning vocational teachers. The criticality of appropriate work loads and class assignments for beginning vocational teachers is one aspect of administrator support that should be emphasized. A second important source of administrative support that should be emphasized is early POSITIVE feedback followed only later by regular CONSTRUCTIVE feedback.

Series of Ongoing Inservice Workshops. The research identified an extensive list of inservice needs of beginning vocational teachers. Using the list of needs as a starting point, the priorities for different groups of teachers should be set based on a needs assessment for each group of teachers.

Beginning teachers with certification based on business and industry experience need immediate help in lesson planning and becoming familiar with the curriculum. Teachers with teacher-education backgrounds have more immediate needs in topics such as stress management and classroom discipline strategies. It is important to understand that beginning vocational teachers are unfamiliar with their roles and so may not have a solid perception of what their actual needs are.

There are several important points to be made about these inservice workshops. They should be made available on an as-needed basis. They should be short in duration and offered throughout the year. For instance, as opposed to a single three-day inservice training at the beginning of the school year, there might be a series of 2 or 3-hour workshops planned throughout the year. As in the case of the orientation, our research indicates that sensory overload often occurs when too much information is given to the beginning teacher too early in the first year.

Courses for Certification or Graduate Credit. For alternatively or vocationally certified teachers, it is important that course work required for certification be available at appropriate times. Coordination of this activity is one responsibility of the LPDC. In addition, in some states, certification requirements include demonstrating competency at performing certain teaching behaviors. A professional development course has been developed as part of this program and

may be used for certification or recertification credit if approved by the state certification personnel. State certification and recertification requirements vary and several activities proposed by this program may qualify for recertification credit. Coordination of coaching activities for meeting state and/or local certification requirements are the responsibility of the LPDC.

Coaching in Reflection. Once the teachers in our study began to move past their initial desire to simply survive, it became clear that they were placing much more emphasis on improving their teaching skills--on using new approaches to delivering instruction. Particularly for those who maintained daily and weekly logs throughout their first two years, there was a repeated emphasis of the value of thinking about what they had done and about how to improve their teaching and other behaviors in their roles as teachers. On numerous occasions, participants indicated that being a part of the study caused them to think about what they were doing and, in effect, to "reflect" on their teaching and their roles as teachers.

The educational literature suggests (Schon, 1983; Grimmett, 1988; Schon, 1988) and our research supports the importance of reflective self-examination for the beginning teacher of vocational education. Indeed, the participants in our research indicated that the opportunity to think about what they were doing and how it affected them was of great importance to them.

Even though this was an unintended outcome of the research, this was important nonetheless.

Beginning teachers should be given guidance and encouragement in the processes of reflective self-examination of their roles and behaviors as teachers. They should have structured exercises that will assist them in finding the time and the opportunity to participate in reflective self-examination. The LPDC should provide initiative and guidance in this effort.

This program will provide numerous opportunities for the beginning teacher to participate in self-reflection. These opportunities include such activities as being involved in small group discussions, discussions with the LPDC and mentor teacher, workshop activities, course activities, self-analysis questions and answers, and video taping and self critique.

Professional Development Plan. The purpose of the professional development plan for a beginning teacher is simply to give the beginning teacher an opportunity to think about his or her future and to determine short-term and long-term goals. The plan should not be a cumbersome task, but an opportunity to explore what the beginning teacher hopes to accomplish. This plan should be developed as a collaborative effort among the beginning teacher, the LPDC, and the mentor teacher. Each plan should be individualized and designed to meet the needs of the beginning teacher so that he or she may become a knowledgeable,

confident teacher. The LPDC and the mentor periodically should discuss with the protégé short-term and long-term goals and assist him or her to determine the objectives that have to be reached in order to meet those goals. The induction program calls for the beginning teacher to set one-year and five-year goals and objectives for his or her professional career.

Final Remarks

This program is a well-researched comprehensive program. The program can be taken as a whole or in any combination of parts to serve the individual needs of specific school systems and beginning vocational teachers. The program is designed in such a way that not only can it serve as an induction program for beginning vocational teachers, but it could be implemented as continuing professional development for all vocational teachers. A set of implementation manuals for the program was developed and is being field-tested during the 1991-92 school year. The interested reader is encouraged to contact the authors. A complete set of guides and manuals are planned for dissemination through the National Center for Research in Vocational Education during late 1992.

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